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Maria McLeod  
VP, Information Systems  
iParty Retail Stores

**Industry:**  
Retail

**Size:**  
1,200 Employees

**Location:**  
Headquartered in Dedham, MA

**Incorporated:**  
1998

**Web site:**  
[www.iparty.com](http://www.iparty.com)

## iParty Retail Stores

### Customer

iParty Corp., operates as a retailer of party goods and planning services, offering products such as paper goods, Halloween costumes, greeting cards, balloons, piñatas, gag gifts, masquerade, and Hawaiian Luau items. The company also licenses an Internet site for party goods and planning at [www.iparty.com](http://www.iparty.com). The company operates approximately 50 stores across the United States, supporting over 1,200 employees.

### Situation

Prior to PAETEC, iParty services were provisioned over a national carrier's network. When the VP of Information Systems, Maria McLeod, began with iParty in 2003, she realized the company was facing serious challenges with their telecom carrier, and they were not being resolved quickly or successfully. "As I attempted to reconcile our billing and support issues with our previous carrier," said McLeod, "I saw how difficult it was to resolve anything." Luckily, she remembered a visitor she had spoken with during her first months at iParty - PAETEC Representative, John Reed. "I contacted John and told him, 'Since I have no obligation to open new iParty stores on [our previous carrier's] network, I'm going to open them on PAETEC's network. I am giving you the opportunity to prove to me, and the company, that you can handle our business,'" recalled McLeod.

PAETEC took that challenge and successfully provisioned iParty's five new stores over our Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) Virtual Private Network (VPN) network. According to McLeod, "Our network implementation was well planned, executed on time, and within budget; it was seamless to the entire organization. PAETEC exceeded my expectations." When the previous carrier's contract expired, PAETEC was brought in to support all iParty locations.

**"Our experience with PAETEC has been extraordinary."**

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VP Information Systems  
iParty Retail Stores

### Solution

PAETEC's MPLS VPN with Quality of Service (QoS) allows iParty to transfer data applications over PAETEC's secure, private IP network. QoS prioritizes each data application, allowing time-sensitive and mission-critical applications, like site-to-site Voice over IP (VoIP), to take precedence over Web browsing, e-mail, and other less time-sensitive applications. PAETEC's MPLS VPN also provides iParty with a meshed network, connecting each site and every other site, resulting in data redundancy.

Network redundancy is essential for iParty. According to McLeod, "We were paying a lot more money with our previous carrier, and we had no redundancy in the network. Even if our corporate office lost service, all of the iParty retail locations would lose service as well." She continued, "With PAETEC, we have a Wide Area Network (WAN) with a redundant site - for less money. If this office loses the connection to the network, the other offices would connect with our redundant site. We are always up and running."

### Result

PAETEC has reduced iParty's annual costs by \$64,000 and provided network redundancy for each individual store, as well as its corporate office. "Price savings of \$64,000 is substantial, especially for the quality of service I am now receiving," stated McLeod. "But I chose PAETEC because customer service is my priority." iParty is extremely pleased with PAETEC's account management and technical support. Because PAETEC proactively monitors their network, technicians and specialists can alert iParty of a problem, before their internal monitors are aware. "We have monitors on our network," said McLeod, "but a circuit has to be down for at least five minutes to set off the alert. I usually get a call from PAETEC well in advance of the alert."

As a result of McLeod's interest in PAETEC's growth and development, she was asked to join PAETEC's Customer Advisory Board. "It's a great experience," stated McLeod. "Not only do I get to interact with my peers, but I have unique insight into what PAETEC's management team is thinking." She continued, "I hope that as PAETEC grows, they continue to provide customers with the personal attention they do now. So far, PAETEC seems to be managing their growth successfully."

### Result (cont.)

iParty plans to continue services with PAETEC as they open eight new locations next year and is currently investigating VoIP technology. “The Hosted IP Telephony solution from PAETEC gives a small company a chance to further reduce telecom costs by taking advantage of existing network infrastructure,” stated McLeod. iParty is a perfect example of a successful customer - the kind that PAETEC is proud to support.